

BIG BEND NATIONAL PARK
RARE BIRD RECORDS
MARCH - MAY 2003

Attached is a list of observations reported by visitors and staff for the period March 1 - May 31. I've compiled only those observations for species which are listed as **Rare, Accidental, Hypothetical** or **Not included** (?) on the park's checklist. A "?spr" indicates a species which is documented for the park but not in the spring season.

On the heels of a wet and mild winter season, the 2003 spring season brought somewhat less rain than hoped for initially and hotter temperatures earlier than expected. Sporadic March rains kept the landscape greener than brown, while April dried up and saw temperatures rise to near the 100 degrees mark. May entered hot, dry, and windy but closed out with welcome rainstorms, helping to push annual rainfall totals closer to average. Year to date precipitation, as compared to ytd totals through May 2002 (+ or -) is as follows: Panther Junction; 2.60 " (-0.69"), Chisos Basin; 3.87" (+1.77"), Rio Grande Village; 2.01" (+1.10"), Castolon; 1.52" (+1.09"), and Persimmon Gap; 2.78" (-0.33").

Observers in the field this spring season turned in reports of several review species and one hypothetical species, the latter report having the potential to move the species to the main park list. On May 07, Arizona guide Peg Abbott first heard, then spotted a **black-bellied whistling duck** in flight over the river at the Daniels Ranch pump house. The duck continued upstream into Hot Springs Canyon, calling as it flew out of sight. Though brief, the observation is in line with previous spring reports over the past several years. Peterson and Zimmer list this species as casual in the spring over the Trans-Pecos, and Bryan reports it as uncommon.

Several weeks earlier in mid-April, **dusky-capped flycatchers** and an **Aztec thrush** were reported in the Boot Canyon area. The dusky-caps have become an annual breeding bird since the first documented nesting in 2000, and were seen or heard by many observers during the spring. The Aztec thrush observation by Overton, if accepted, will be the first documented sighting of this species in the park since 1982. Follow-up visits by several observers failed to relocate this Mexican species. In the first week of May, at the peak of the migration, at least three parties of birders found a **slate-throated redstart** in the vicinity of Boot Springs. The May 2-3 observations closely match three spring 2002 reports of the same species (April 25-27). This year's reports were well documented, including photographs and audiotapes. In the same period, two independent reports of a **Baird's sparrow** at the Daniels Ranch picnic area (Webster and Abbott) rounded out the flurry of review species reports for the peak migration period. Finally, two intriguing reports by the same observer of an **elegant trogon** came in on May 28-29. The reports were voice only identifications. In spite of a number of attempts by many people, no actual sight observations helped verify the report.

Other highlights for the spring include a pair of gray hawks that nested for the third year in a row at the south end of the Cottonwood campground. The pair of common black-hawk returned to Rio Grande Village for the 8th year in a row, utilizing the same grove but now on a new nest. The hawks arrived around March 13, the grove was cordoned off soon after, and the pair began sitting tight on the nest around April 13. On June 2, Melissa Powell observed and photographed a downy nestling. As of this writing, the chick is doing fine. Many observers saw painted redstarts this spring. It appears at least two, and possibly three pairs, are nesting in the Boot Canyon.

Peregrine falcons were monitored through the season, and will continue to be watched until fledging is completed. At the time of this report no numbers were available on the number of eyries within the park. John Maresh of the TP&WD will perform the annual black-capped vireo survey again this year, sometime in the first week of June.

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<u>SPECIES</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>OBSERVER</u>	<u>PARK STATUS</u>
Least bittern	1	3/31	RGV-Nature Trail	Linda Clark	rare
Tri-colored heron	1	4/09	RGV-Nature Trail	S.Wilkinson D. Axt	rare
Black-crowned night-heron	1	4/13	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	3/31	RGV-Nature Trail	Linda Clark	rare
	2	4/09	RGV-Nature Trail	S.Wilkinson	rare
	2*	4/13	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	2	4/15	RGV-Nature Trail	Peter Debes	rare
	1	4/16	Talley	Melissa Powell	rare
	1	4/18	Solis	Melissa Powell	rare

*2 adults carrying nesting material: no nesting records for park; presence of juveniles in summer of 2002 suggested probability.

**Black-bellied
Whistling-duck** **1** **5/07** **Rio Grande Vill.** **Peg Abbott** **hyp.**

Hypothetical: Detailed report pending.

Bufflehead	4m,f	4/13	Hot Springs	Mark Flippo	rare
Common black-hawk	1	3/13	Rio Grande Vill.	Mark Flippo	rare
	2*	3/13-31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	2*	4/01-30	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare
	2	5/01-31	Rio Grande Vill.	Many observers	rare

* at same nest area used in 2002 season, but on new nest. Area near nest closed off on 3/20 to prevent unnecessary intrusion. Hawks on nest with eggs (?) from ~4/13.

Common Black-hawk (Other than RGV)	1	4/07	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
Gray hawk	1	3/24	Cottonwood Camp.	Bob Adams	unc.
	2	4/01-5/31	Cottonwood Camp.	Many observers	unc.
	1	4/24	RGV-Daniels Ranch	Bill Carlson	unc.

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Merlin	1f	4/07	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
Forster's tern	1	5/11	Hot Springs	David Elkowitz	acc.
Rock dove	1	4/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
Eurasian collared Dove	1	3/04	Croton Springs	Karen Poole	acc.
	1	4/24	Rio Grande Vill. Blackhawk grove	Charles and Linda Salmon	acc.
Magnificent Hummingbird	1m	5/02	Boot Springs	Charles Lyon Tom VandenBerg	rare
Elegant Trogon	1*	5/28-29	Green Gulch	Larry Norris	acc.
*Texas review species: Voice only identification. Unconfirmed.					
Cordilleran Flycatcher	1	4/26	Pine Canyon	Tom VandenBerg	rare
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	1*	4/16	Boot Canyon	Joshua Clark	acc.
	1*	4/19	Boot Canyon	Eric Carpenter	acc.
	1*	5/02	Boot Spring	Tom VandenBerg	acc.
	1*	5/03	Boot Canyon	Mark Adams Eric Carpenter Mark Lockwood	acc.
*Texas Review Species: Reports to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 10/14/03					
Brown-crested Flycatcher	1	4/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	5/07	Rio Grande Vill.	Peg Abbott	rare
Great Kiskadee	1	4/24-25	RGC-campground	J.Smitlaan,R.Oliver	acc.
Tropical/Couch's Kingbird	1	4/21	Cottonwood Camp.	J.Hines	rare
Tropical kingbird	1	4/28	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan&Will Risser	rare
	2	5/03	Cottonwood Camp.	Richard Webster	rare
	1	5/14	RGV-Nature Trail	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	5/24	Boquillas Cyn	Bill Carlson	rare
Eastern kingbird	1	5/19	Terlingua Abajo	Bill,Sarah Bourbon	rare
	1	5/20	Cottonwood Camp.	Otto Peter	rare

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Black-capped Vireo	1	4/27	Blue Creek	Jay Carisle	rare
	4m,f	5/01	Juniper Canyon	Jim&Lynne Weber	rare
	1f	5/19	Green Gulch	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	5/31	Window/Oak Spr Jct	Ruth Ganes	rare
Gray vireo	1	3/28	Blue Creek	Tom VandenBerg	unc.
	1	4/11	Blue Creek	Paul&Koni Fank	unc.
	Several	4/11-5/31	Blue Creek	Many observers	unc.
	1	5/12	Lost Mine Trail	Tom VandenBerg	unc.
	1	5/22	Green Gulch	Mark Flippo	unc.
Yellow-throated Vireo	2	3/31	RGV-Nature trail	Billie Mann	acc.
Cassin's vireo	3	5/03	Boot Springs	Mark Adams Eric Carpenter Mark Lockwood	rare
Blue-headed vireo	1m	4/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
Carolina wren	1	3/04	Pine Canyon	J.S. Munzinger Brian Cliff	rare
	1	4/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	4/30	Santa Elena Cyn	Melissa Powell	rare
	2	5/02	Cottonwood Camp.	??	rare
Aztec thrush*	1m	4/18	Boot Canyon Trail	Mike Overton	?spg
*Texas Review species: report to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 2/27/04					
Gray catbird	1	3/08-4/19	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
	1	4/27	Basin oxid. Ponds	Nige Milbourne	rare
Sprague's pipit	1	4/07	Santa Elena Jctn	H.Lau Ruschuus	rare
Golden-winged Warbler	1m	4/27	Boot Canyon	Jim&Lynne Weber	acc.
	1m	4/30	Oak Springs	John Haynes	acc.
Tennessee warbler	1	5/03	Boot Canyon	Mark Adams Eric Carpenter Mark Lockwood	acc.
Magnolia warbler	1	5/05	Laguna Mdw. Tr.	Janet Crane	

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Black-throated Blue warbler	1m	5/05	Sam Nail Ranch	Greg Lasley	rare
Hermit warbler	sev.	4/18	High Chisos	Mike Overton	rare
	1	4/19	Boot Canyon	Eric Carpenter	rare
Yellow-throated Warbler	1	4/17	Santa Elena Cyn	Peter Debes	acc.
Palm warbler	1	5/02	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan&Will Risser C. Lyon, M. Austin	acc.
	1	5/04	Rio Grande Vill.	Richard Webster	acc.
Worm-eating Warbler	1	4/11	Dugout Wells	Mark Flippo	rare
Painted redstart	1	4/19	Boot canyon	Eric Carpenter	spo.
	2*	4/29	Boot Canyon	Jan&Will Risser	spo.
	2*	5/01	Boot Canyon	Bill Carlson	spo.
	6*	5/02	Boot Canyon	Tom VandenBerg Stan & Lori Isley	spo.
	4*	5/03	Boot Canyon	Mark Adams Eric Carpenter Mark Lockwood	spo.
	4*	5/04	Boot canyon	Greg Lasley	spo.
* Nest building					
Slate-throated Redstart	1*	5/02	Boot Springs	Stan & Lori Isley Mike Austin Charles Lyon	acc.
	1*	5/03	Boot Canyon	Mark Adams Eric Carpenter Mark Lockwood	acc
*Texas Review species: report to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted					
Baird's sparrow	1*	5/04	RGV-Daniels Rch	Richard Webster	rare
	1*	5/07	RGV-Daniels Rch	Peg Abbott	rare

*Texas Review species: report to TBRC:Lockwood. Accepted 6/04

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Rose-breasted Grosbeak	1	4/28	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan&Will Risser	rare
	1m	5/02	Dugout Wells	Bob Hall	rare
	1m	5/08	Cottonwood Camp.	Bill Carlson	rare
Lazuli bunting	1m	5/01	Cottonwood Camp.	Jan&Will Risser	rare
Common grackle	1	5/04	Rio Grande Vill.	Richard Webster	rare
	1	5/17	Panther Junction	Mark Flippo	rare
Hooded oriole	1m	4/05	Cottonwood Camp.	J. Brinkerhoff	rare
	2m,f	4/07	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	2m,f	4/16	Cottonwood Camp.	Mark Flippo	rare
	1m	4/17	Cottonwood Camp.	Peter Debes	rare
	1m	5/25	Rio Grande Vill.	??	rare
Baltimore oriole	1m	4/25	Dugout Wells	Bill Carlson	acc.
	1m	5/03	Cottonwood Camp.	Bill Carlson Richard Webster	acc.
Cassin's finch	2m	4/09	RGV-Nature Trail	S.Wilkinson D.Axt	spo.
	1m	5/01	Boot Canyon Trail	Bill Carlson	spo.